

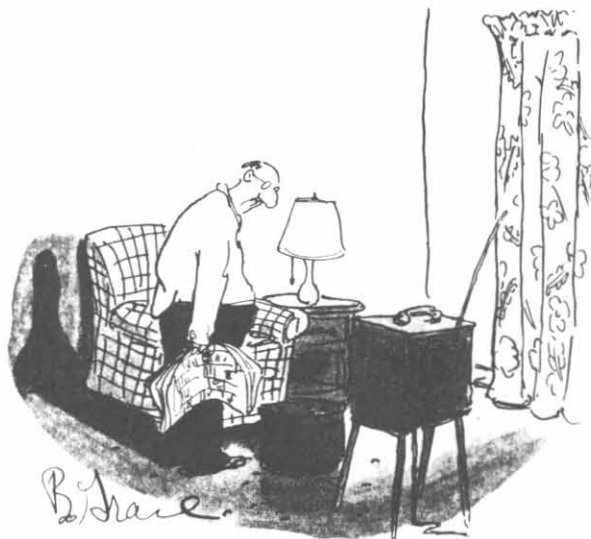
### Issue 79

## Astrology

A Gallup poll in 1984 indicated that 52 percent of American teenagers believed that astrology works. Astrology columns appear in over 1200 newspapers in the U.S. Does this mean that astrology should be taken seriously?

Consider some of the evidence and some pointed questions:

1. What is the likelihood that one-twelfth of the world's population is having the same kind of day?
2. Why is the moment of birth, not conception, crucial for casting a horoscope?



**"The practice of astrology took a major step toward achieving credibility today when, as predicted, everyone born under the sign of Scorpio was run over by an egg lorry [truck]."**

*Drawing by Bud Grace. Reproduced by permission of Punch.*

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ISSUE

3. If astrologers are as good as they claim to be, why aren't they richer?
4. Are all horoscopes that were done before the discovery of the three outer planets incorrect?
5. Why do different schools of astrology so strongly disagree with one another?
6. If astrologers claim that your personality is dictated by the attraction of the planets at the moment of your birth, how do you account for the fact that the gravitational pull of the delivering obstetrician far outweighed that of the planets involved?

After the San Francisco earthquake in October 1989, *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen found that Nancy Reagan's much-publicized astrologer had been home in San Francisco. "What I want to know is why a woman who told the president the precise moment to sign a treaty couldn't see an earthquake coming," he wrote. Alas, she said, that kind of prediction is best left to an earthquake astrologer. ("In Brief," *Skeptical Inquirer*, Spring 1990, p. 239.)

Should people who believe in astrology be allowed to teach science in public schools, practice medicine, or hold public office? Would you vote for such a person if you had the choice?

***Think about this . . .*** Would you be willing to use a drug or cosmetic that you knew had been tested extensively on live animals? Would you use a drug or cosmetic that was guaranteed not to have been tested on live animals and might therefore be unsafe?

*High school football, power mowers, and mountain climbing take more lives each year than nuclear power plants. Should they be abolished before nuclear power plants are?*